

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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R 171250Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0517

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, XG, AU, SHUM
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN PROPOSAL FOR PRIVATE EAST-WEST ROUND TABLE ON
CSCE IN VIENNA, MARCH 25-26.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN CZERNETZ INFORMED
US JANUARY 14 HE HAS MOUNTED INITIATIVE FOR PRIVATE ROUND
TABLE OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS TO DISCUSS CSCE MATTERS,
VIENNA, MARCH 25-26. ACCORDING TO CZERNETZ, COMMUNIST
COUNTRIES WILL PROBABLY COME AND EUROPE COUNCIL COUNTRIES
ARE ALSO LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE. BELATEDLY HE HAS ASKED FOR
USG AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION AND WHETHER US CONGRESS REPS
MIGHT PARTICIPATE. AS INITIAL REACTION WE POINTED OUT TO
HIM AND ALSO TO AUSTRIAN MFA OUR CONCERNS ABOUT TECHNICAL
AND SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS SUCH GATHERING WOULD PRESENT FOR
US AND THAT GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON WOULD BE REQUESTED.

2. KARL CZERNETZ, CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT AND PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE (COE), INFORMED US JANUARY
14 THAT HE EXPECTS SOVIET UNION AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN
COMMUNIST STATES TO AGREE TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO A
"ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION BETWEEN EUROPEAN POLITICANS
FROM EAST AND WEST" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FINAL ACT
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OF HELSINKI TO BE HELD AT VIENNA MARCH 25-26, 1977.
HE SAID MAYOR OF VIENNA, LEOPOLD GRATZ, HAD AGREED
TO EXTEND FORMAL INVITATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVES OF
POLITICAL LIFE FROM EUROPEAN STATES TAKING PART IN
CSCE TO PRIVATE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THAT WOULD NOT GIVE
RISE TO ANY COMMITMENTS, TAKE ANY DECISIONS OR PASS
ANY RESOLUTIONS. HE ASKED WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF USG

WOULD BE TO SUCH A GATHERING AND WHETHER REPRESENTATIVES
OF US CONGRESS WOULD AGREE TO ATTEND.

3. CZERNETZ SAID HIS INITIATIVE HAD GROWN OUT OF
EFFORTS SINCE 1974 OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF COE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE BETWEEN
EAST AND WEST AT PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL. UNTIL LATE LAST
YEAR SOVIETS HAD REJECTED ALL SUCH OVERTURES ON BASIS
THAT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE COE AND HAD ALSO TURNED
A DEAF EAR TO PROPOSALS THAT DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE
OUTSIDE COE FRAMEWORK. CZERNETZ SAID THAT LAST OCTOBER,
HOWEVER, DURING THIS VISIT TO WARSAW AS CHAIRMAN OF
THE AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (ALTHOUGH HE WAS
ACCOMPANIED BY HIS COE CHEF DE CABINET, DR. MARCZAND,
AND THE TRIP WAS PAID BY THE COE), INTERNATIONAL
SECRETARY OF POLITBUREAU AND CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE OF POLISH PARLIAMENT, DR. FRELIC, INDICATED
EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES HAD BEEN RECONSIDERING
IDEA OF EAST-WEST ROUND TABLE AND WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT
INVITATIONS TO TWO-DAY MEETING AT VIENNA IN WHICH
FIRST DAY WOULD BE DEVOTED TO GENERAL DISCUSSION OF
HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND SECOND TO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS,
SUCH AS CULTURAL EXCHANGES, COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND
RESEARCH, ETC. FOLLOWING FURTHER SOUNDINGS WITH
SOVIET AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS IN VIENNA AND
FURTHER CONSULTATIONS IN THE COE, CZERNETZ, AGAIN IN HIS
AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY, ON DECEMBER 6 ADDRESSED
LETTERS (TEXT BY SEPTTEL) TO AMBASSADORS OF ALL
COMMUNIST COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN CSCE AND TO
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PRESIDENT OF THE FINNISH PARLIAMENT (VIA FINNISH EMBASSY)
SOLICITING VIEWS OF "APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES" IN THOSE
COUNTRIES ABOUT POSSIBLE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT
VIENNA ON MARCH 25-26.

4. CZERNETZ SAID THE SOVIET COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY TOLD
HIM JANUARY 4 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS, IN GENERAL,
FAVORABLE INCLINED TOWARD PROPOSED ROUND TABLE,
ALTHOUGH SOME PROBLEMS (OTHERWISE UNSPECIFIED) MIGHT
HAVE TO BE RESOLVED. CZERNETZ SAID THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD
FURTHER FROM SOVIETS BUT THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO INQUIRE
OF SOVIET COUNSELOR BEFORE DEPARTING FOR STRASBOURG
JANUARY 22 TO REPORT TO COE. CZERNETZ THEN ASKED
WHETHER, IN EVENT OF AN AFFIRMATIVE SOVIET REPLY, AS
EXPECTED, HE SHOULD INFORM SOVIETS THAT INVITATIONS
WOULD BE EXTENDED TO PARLIAMENTS OF THE WEST EUROPEAN
STATES, UNITED STATES AND CANADA. CZERNETZ SAID HE
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF HE COULD
SAY THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF US CONGRESS WERE PREPARED

TO PARTICIPATE AND ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE
TO HAVE US GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ABOUT SUCH A ROUND TABLE
AND AN INDICATION OF CONGRESS'S RESPONSE TO SUCH AN
INVITATION BEFORE HE SAW THE SOVIET COUNSELOR.

5. EMBOFF REGISTERED SURPRISE THAT CZERNETZ AND COE
HAD NOT CONSULTED EITHER USG REPRESENTATIVES OR US
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS DIRECTLY AT EARLIER STAGE. (CZERNETZ
REPLIED RATHER LAMELY THAT CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVERS
HAD NOT ATTENDED COE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY MEETING IN
SEPTEMBER AND COE PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD THOUGH IT
IMPOSSIBLE TO COORDINATE WITH USG AND CONGRESS DURING
ELECTION CAMPAIGN.) EMBOFF NOTED FURTHER THAT CHANGE
OF ADMINISTRATION WAS IMMINENT IN WASHINGTON AND
EXPRESSED DOUBT THEREFORE THAT REPLIES FROM WASHINGTON
COULD BE RECEIVED BEFORE JANUARY 22. HE SAID, HOWEVER,

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02
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THAT EMBASSY WOULD CERTAINLY FORWARD HIS INQUIRY TO
DEPARTMENT, ALONG WITH COPY OF TEXT OF HIS LETTER OF
DECEMBER THAT HE HAD PROVIDED. EMBOFF ALSO NOTED STRONG
USG OPPOSITION TO PAST SOVIET EFFORTS TO ENGAGE WEST
EUROPEANS IN DISCUSSIONS OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE TO THE EXCLUSION OF US AND CANADA. IT WOULD,

THEREFORE, CERTAINLY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROPOSED ROUND TABLE TO BE HELD WITHOUT INVITING AMERICAN AND CANADIAN PARTICIPATION OR TO LEAVE THE SOVIET COUNSELOR WITH IMPRESSION THAT ONLY EUROPEAN STATES, AS CZERNETZ LETTER HAD SEEMED TO IMPLY, WERE TO BE INVITED. EMBOFF POINTED OUT ALSO THAT US CONGRESS WAS SEPARATE AND EQUAL BRANCH OF US GOVERNMENT AND, WHATEVER EXECUTIVE BRANCH VIEWS OF THIS SPECIFIC INITIATIVE MIGHT BE, EXECUTIVE BRANCH COULD ONLY ADVISE CONGRESS OF ITS POSITION AND IN NO WAY INTERPOSE ITSELF BETWEEN ORGANIZERS OF SUCH A ROUND TABLE AND CONGRESS.

6. LATER SAME DAY (JANUARY 14) WE RAISED WITH SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE AND, AFTER SUMMARIZING CZERNETZ'S PRESENTATION TO US, REGISTERED SAME GENERAL POINTS AS HAD BEEN DONE WITH CZERNETZ (NO CONTACT WITH US IN EARLY STAGE OF INITIATIVE, ROUND TABLE CAST AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETING OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON CSCE MATTERS, EFFORTS OF SOVIETS IN PAST TO EXCLUDE US FROM SECURITY INTERESTS RE EUROPE). ADDITIONAL POINTS MADE WERE 1) THAT US PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD TRIED EARLIER TO VISIT EE COUNTRIES AND SOVIET UNION FOR JUST SUCH CONVERSATIONS BUT WERE REFUSED VISAS; 2) THAT PROPOSED ROUND TABLE UNLESS VERY CAREFULLY PREPARED COULD BECOME EE PROPAGANDA EXERCISE WHICH COULD PREJUDICE BELGRADE MEETINGS, AND 3) THAT WHILE WE WOULD FORWARD TEXT OF CZERNETZ LETTER TO WASHINGTON, REACTION OF GOA TO CZERNETZ INITIATIVE WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR US ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS IN DEVELOPING POSITION.

7. MFA OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT MFA WAS ONLY AWARE IN GENERAL TERMS OF CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE AND HAD IMPRESSION FROM CONVERSATION IN NOVEMBER THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY TO BE REALIZED, AS HAD EARLIER CZERNETZ EFFORT VIA IPU. SOURCE REGISTERED SOME SURPRISE THAT INITIATIVE HAD ADVANCED SO FAR AND THAT IN ADDITION CONTACT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AT SUCH LATE STAGE WITH USG. HIS COMMENTS SUGGESTED HE CONSIDERED CZERNETZ ENDEAVOR TO BE ILL-CONCEIVED AND HAPHAZARD UNDERTAKING. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UPON LATTER'S RETURN TO VIENNA AND BE IN TOUCH WITH US LATER WITH MORE FORMAL GOA REACTION.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WE DO NOT INTEND AT THIS TIME TO RAISE CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE WITH EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN VIENNA SINCE WE ARE UNABLE TO GAUGE SERIOUSNESS OF SUPPORT IN WEST AND LIKELIHOOD OF

SUCCESS OF CZERNETZ INITIATIVE. IN LATTER CONNECTION
KEY FACTOR, IT SEEMS TO US, WILL BE REACTION OF EC-9
AND US AND CANADA TO CZERNETZ PROPOSAL. EMBASSY
WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE EARLY GUIDANCE ON
ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL VIEWS ON PROPOSED
ROUND TABLE IN VIENNA. DEPARTMENT REQUESTED DISTRIBUTE
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THIS MESSAGE TO OTHER POSTS, AS APPROPRIATE.BUCHANAN

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Message Attributes

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